**PRESS RELEASE**
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**Farm Service Agency to Assist Flood Recovery Efforts on Private Forestland**

*Montpelier, VT* – On October 4, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that all Vermont county FSA offices are ready to accept applications for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). This program offers financial assistance to eligible forest landowners to help restore land that has been damaged by the July rainstorms that resulted in widespread flooding and land instability across Vermont.

Various projects may qualify under this program, but its primary focus is addressing erosion and water quality issues affecting forest roads and trails resulting from heavy rainfall.

The signup period for EFRP began on October 10, 2023, and ends on November 8, 2023.

Eligible nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners who have experienced damage due to this weather event are encouraged to apply for assistance before commencing any reconstruction efforts. However, even if restoration work has already begun, landowners may still be eligible to participate.

Prior to approval of an EFRP application for assistance, an onsite inspection of the damages will be conducted by FSA, in collaboration with a state forester. This step is crucial to verify the extent of damages and facilitate an environmental review.

To meet eligibility criteria, NIPF land must have had existing tree cover or tree cover immediately before the qualifying natural disaster occurred and must be sustainable for tree growth. Additionally, the land must be owned or leased by a nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, or another private legal entity with clear decision-making authority over the land.

For further information on EFRP or to initiate the application process, please get in touch with the Farm Service Agency county office that serves the damaged land or visit the website at farmers.gov/recover. County office contact information can be found using the Service Center Locator tool available on the Farmers.gov website: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>.

Vermont USDA Service Centers:

Addison (802-388-6748) 66 Catamount Park, Middlebury, VT 05753

Franklin/Grand Isle (802-527-1296), 50 S. Main Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

Rutland/Bennington (802-775-8034) 170 S. Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701

Caledonia/Essex (802-748-2641) 481 Summer St., St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Lamoille (802-888-4935), 109 Professional Drive, Morrisville, VT 05661

Windham (802-254-9766), 28 Vernon Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Chittenden/Washington (802-288-8155, 94 Harvest Lane, Williston, VT 05495

Orleans (802-334-6090), 59 Waterfront Plaza, Newport, VT 05855

Windsor/Orange (802-295-7942), 28 Farmvu Drive, White River Jct., VT 05001

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